THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Removal of unexploded shells from firing ranges

1567. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "unexploded shells maiming many at army firing range", appearing in the Hindustan Times dated the 18th February, 1999;

(b) what is the criteria for identifying firing ranges by armed forces and the extent to wich consultations, if any, are held for monitoring of firing ranges with forest or other departments; and

(c) what steps Government would suggest to ensure that the unexploded shells are removed from firing ranges immediately so that common people are not affected by it in any manner?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Army authorities in consultation with State Governments indentify large tracts of land suitable for the purpose. Notifications under the Manoeuvres Field Firing and Artillery Practices Act, 1938 are then issued by State Government after seeking prior clearance from State Forest Department and Ministry of Environment and Forests wherever necessary.

(c) As per existing instructions, a unit or army formation which carries out firing practice records the location of unexploded shells/bombs at the end of firing on each day. These unexploded shells are required to be destroyed.

युद्ध में मारे गये सैनिकों की विधवाओं और उनके बच्चों के लिए आवासीय योजना

1568. **श्रीमती सरोज दुबे:** क्या रक्षा मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार ने युद्ध में तथा सीमा पर मारे गए सैनिकों की विधवाओं और बच्चों के लिए कोई आवासीय योजना बनाई है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ग) यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?

रक्षा मंत्री (श्री जॉर्ज फर्नान्डीज): (क) से (ग) आर्मी वेलफेअर हाउसिंग आर्गेनाइजेशन ने अपनी विभिन्न आवासीय योजनाओं के अंतर्गत निर्मित तीन प्रतिशत मकान सेना कार्मिकों की विधवाओं को वरीयता के आधार पर आबंटित करने के लिए निर्धारित कर दिए हैं। कार्रवाई में मारे गए सशस्त्र सैन्य कार्मिकों को इंदिरा आवास योजना में भी शामिल कर दिया गया है। कुछ राज्य सरकारें भी अपनी आवासीय योजनाओं के अंतर्गत उन्हें आवासीय स्थान तथा आवास प्रदान करती हैं।

Accidents of Indian Naval Ships

1569. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian naval ships that have been involved in accidents at sea in the last five years, giving the details thereof; and the amount of loss, in terms of men and material, suffered by the Navy;

(b) what were the reasons for the accidents and were those accidents inquired into; and

(c) if so, the outcome of investigations and the action taken to check such accidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) During the last five years, only one Indian Naval Ship has met with an accident at Sea. INS Jyoti, the fleet tanker while on her return journey from Philippines, collided with a Bulk Carrier "MV Yickwing" of Panaman registration on 01 November 1998 in the Malacca Strait. Both the ships have sustained extensive damage to structure. However, no personnel were injured. The High Court of Malaya Jahan Bahru in Malaysia has been approached to claim compensation of damage from "MV Yickwing". A Board of Inquiry has been ordered to inquire into the reasons for the collision. The inquiry is in progress.

Inadequacy of defence preparedness

1570. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our defence